

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1 and 2 are pending in the application. Claim 1 is independent.

In the present amendment, claim 1 is amended. The support for the claim amendment may be found in Applicants' specification, for example, pages 9 – 10, Table 1. No new matter is added.

Claim Objections

The Office objected to claim 1 and its dependent claim because the claim is allegedly not a proper method claim.

In the present amendment, claim 1 is amended to obviate this objection. Withdrawal of the claim objections is respectfully requested.

Rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Farhangi et al (US Patent 5647008, hereinafter "Far") further in view of EBU/AES engineering guidelines (Copyright 1995, hereinafter "EBU/AES").

Applicants submit that for at least the following reasons, claim 1 is patentable over Far and EBU/AES, either singly or in combination.

For example, claim 1, in part, requires:

"Method for processing two or more decoded but not yet combined audio signals received or replayed from a bitstream, that each said decoded audio signals has a different number of channels per decoded audio signal and/or different channel configurations for channel to speaker mapping."

(Emphases added)

Applicants submit that Far apparently deals with stereo signals only, as Far discloses that an MPEG-Audio input receives MPEG-digital audio signals from a conventional source (column 3, lines 44 – 46) and that left data word and right data word provide the input for the left and right channels, raw audio data signals (column 4, lines 4 – 6). Although Far also discloses a mono microphone signal, in that case there is no channel configuration conflict because such a mono signal can be simply fed to both stereo channels. Far deals with mixing of stereo signals

with different sampling frequency, bandwidth, resolution/bit depth, data format, and amplitude (column 4, lines 9 – 12 and lines 22 – 27). Far deals with sample configuration whereas, in contrast, the claimed invention deals with channel configuration. For example, as disclosed in Applicants' specification, pages 9 – 10, Table 1, the number of channels may be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 8, etc. per decoded audio signal, and the different channel configurations are related to one or more of left front, right front, center front, left surround, right surround, rear surround, left outside front, right outside right, front low frequencies, for mono, stereo or surround sound, etc. A channel configuration conflict as defined in the claimed invention is neither mentioned nor is a solution proposed for such problem. The same is true for the EBU/AES digital audio interface guidelines. Therefore, neither Far nor EBU/AES teaches or suggests the above claimed feature.

In view of at least the foregoing, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over Far and EBU/AES, either singly or in combination.

Rejection of claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Far in view of EBU/AES, further in view of Saunders et al. (US Patent 7266501, hereinafter Saunders).

Applicants submit that Saunders, does not in any way cure the deficiencies present in the combination of Far and EBU/AES with regard to suggesting the features of claim 1, as discussed above. Therefore, claim 2 is patentable because at least it depends from claim 1 and includes further distinguishing features.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Having fully addressed the Examiner's rejections it is believed that, in view of the preceding amendments and remarks, this application stands in condition for allowance. Accordingly then, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited. If, however, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at (609) 734-6813, so that a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview may be scheduled.

Respectfully submitted,
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